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SCRIPTURE READINGS
FOR
SCHOOLS and FAMILIES

JOSHUA TO TOLMON



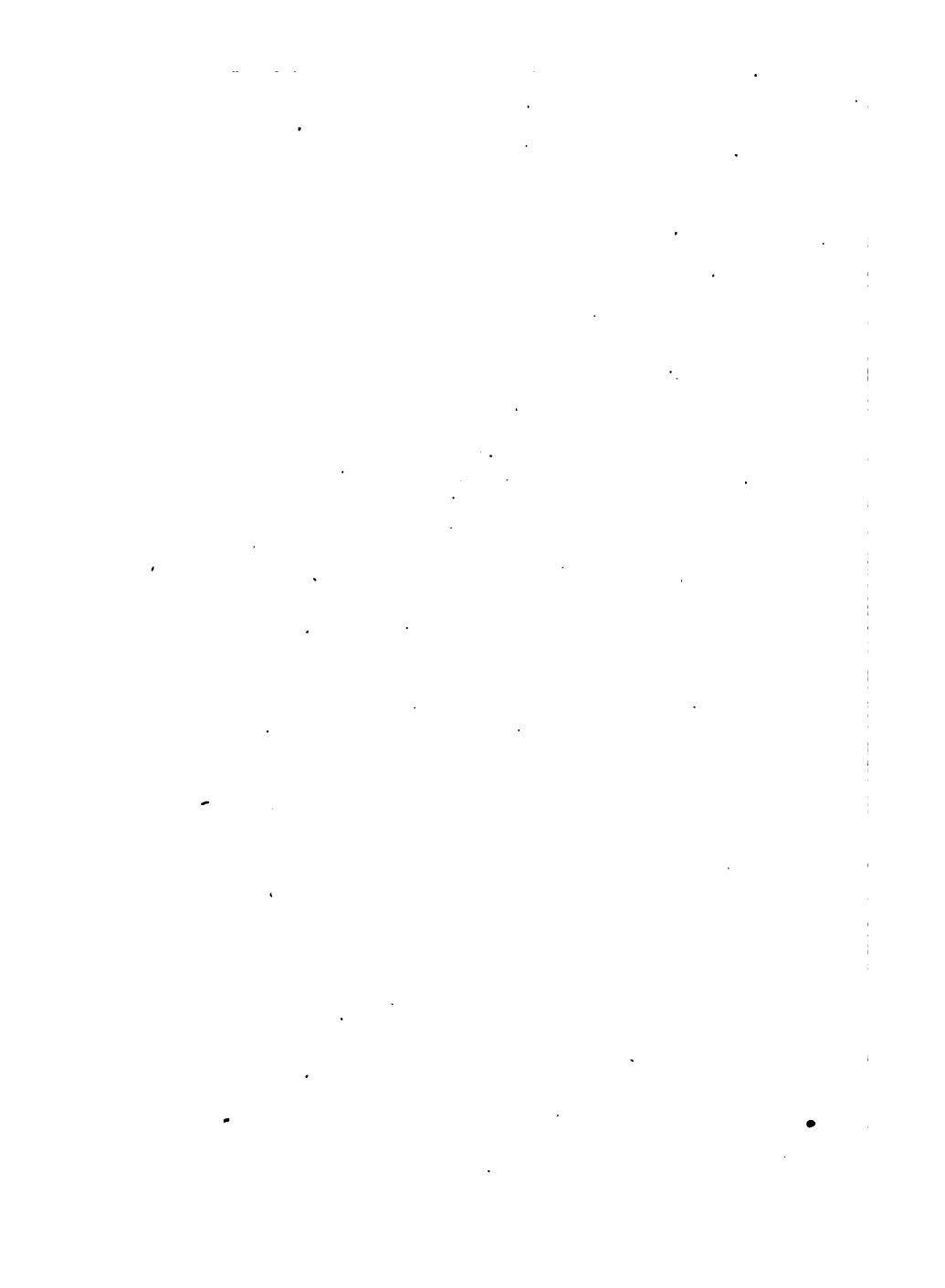
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SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.



SCRIPTURE READINGS
FOR
SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

FROM JOSHUA TO SOLOMON.

BY
CHARLOTTE M. YONGE,
AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE," ETC. ETC.

WITH A MAP.



London :
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1872.

101. i. 392.

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R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

P R E F A C E.

THIS second part of the Readings carries on the narrative from the settlement of the Israelites in the Promised Land to the culmination of their prosperity under Solomon.

I have attempted to make the arrangement as chronological as possible, but this cannot be done with any certainty, as no date can be considered as absolutely fixed before the beginning of the kingdom and the establishment of the schools of the prophets, where history as well as sacred song was written.

With this endeavour, striving to follow the best supported and most reverent conjectures, I have been obliged to transpose the narratives in the Book of Judges a good deal ; bringing in the history of Ruth and the earlier chapters of Samuel where their dates seem to fix them. This may, I hope, assist teachers as well as pupils in understanding the bearing of events one upon the other. I have also introduced a few of the Psalms, and indicated others, in the hope that reading them in connection with the life of David may give a more vivid historical interest, and, what is more important, a stronger appreciation of their devotional and typical import. For it seems to me that nothing is a stronger protection against the "hindering and slandering of God's Holy Word" than that deep sense of its Unity and Divinity which is produced by

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being early imbued with the typical and prophetical character of the Old Testament, and thus of its being part of the same design with the New, even to the smallest details—meaning, of course those that are independent of human error in transcription or translation.

A third division, reaching to the return from the Captivity, and endeavouring to harmonize the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and illustrate them from the Prophets, is nearly completed.

C. M. YONGE.

OTTERBOURNE,
January, 1872.

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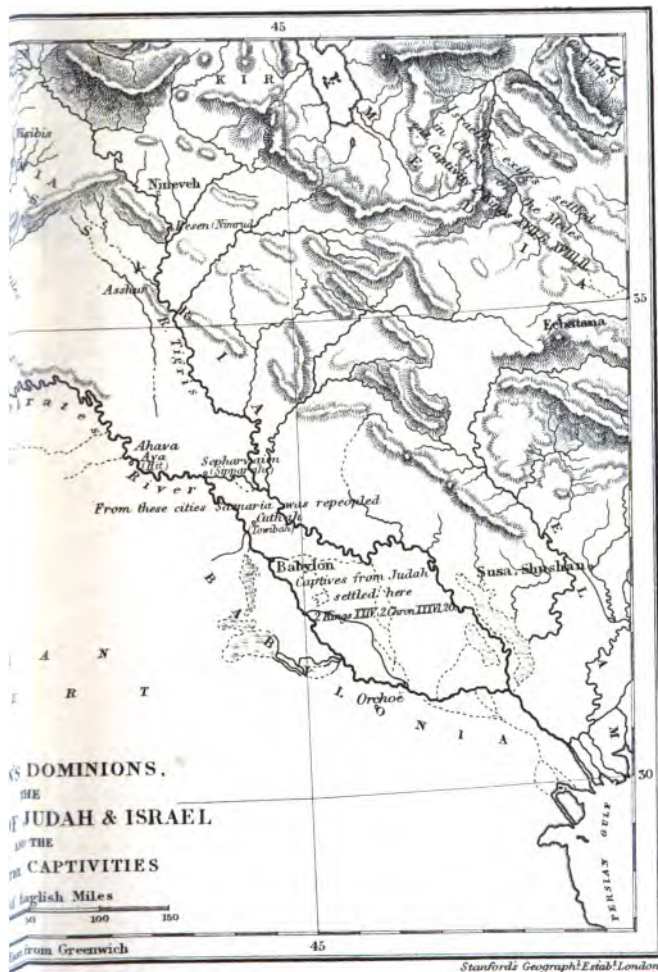
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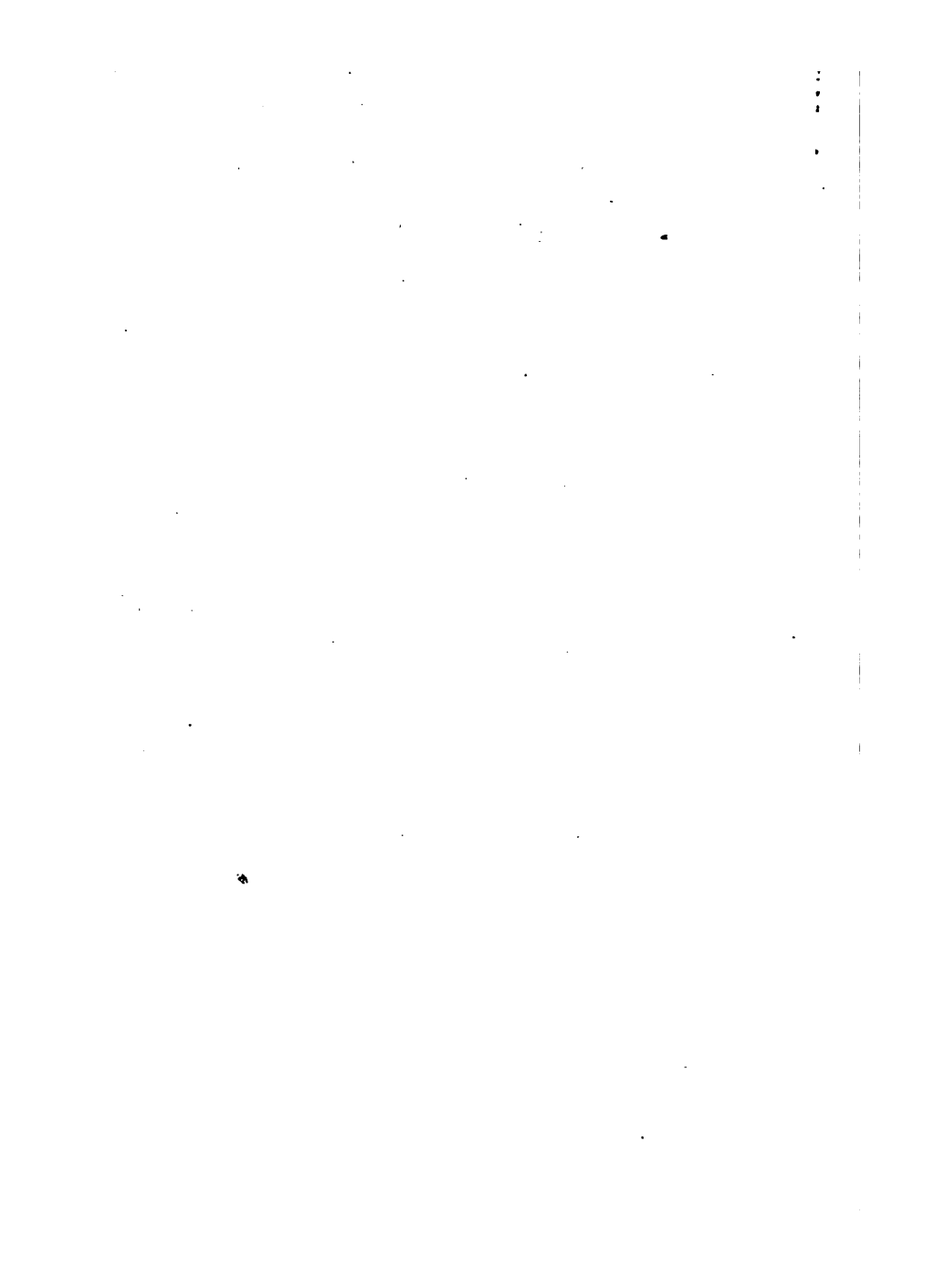
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SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR CHILDREN.

BOOK III.

LESSON I.

JOSHUA TAKES THE COMMAND.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA i.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister,* saying,

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

* Servant.

Pass through the host,* and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

LESSON II.

THE FAITH OF RAHAB.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA ii. 1—22.

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim † two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a woman's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither

* Army.

† The Acacias.

did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

LESSON III.

THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA iii.

And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the

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covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits* by measure : come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go : for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves : for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify † thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above ; and they shall stand upon an heap.

And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people ;

And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan : and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, ‡ failed, and were cut off : and the people passed over right against Jericho

And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean § over Jordan.

* 1,500 yards, not much less than a mile.

† Make great.

‡ The Dead Sea.

§ Quite-

LESSON IV.

THE MEMORIAL OF THE PASSAGE.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA iv. 1—18.

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man :

And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel :

That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones ?

Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD ; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off : and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood : and they are there unto this day.*

For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua : and the people hastened and passed over.

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them :

* At the time the Book of Joshua was written.

About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

LESSON V.

THE VISION OF JOSHUA.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA V.

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

And Joshua circumcised the children of Israel.

And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua cir-

uncircumcised : for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal* unto this day.

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land ; neither had the children of Israel manna any more ; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand : and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

And he said, Nay ; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

LESSON VI.

JERICHO BESIEGED.

B.C. 1451.—JOSH. vi. 1—14.

Now Jericho was straitly† shut up because of the children of Israel : none went out, and none came in.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns : and the seventh day ye shall compass‡ the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.

* Rolling away.

† Closely.

‡ Go round.

And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward* came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

LESSON VII.

JERICHO TAKEN.

JOSHUA vi. 15—vii. 5.

B.C. 1451.—“*We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their time of old; how thou hast driven out the heathen with thy hand, and planted them in; how thou hast destroyed the nations, and cast them out. For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*” (Psalm xlv.) *Thus was the praise of God for the conquest of Canaan sung in after times. Thus did Israel learn that “there is no other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God,” and that when acting under His commands they were secure of victory.*

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the

* Guard of men behind.

dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times : only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout ; for the LORD hath given you the city.

And the city shall be accursed,* even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD : only Rahab shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated † unto the LORD : they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets : and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into Rahab's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swear unto her.

And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had ; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein : only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

And Joshua saved Rahab alive, and her father's household, and all that she had ; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day ; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

And Joshua adjured ‡ them at that time, saying,

Cursed be the man before the LORD,

That riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho :

He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn,

And in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

So the LORD was with Joshua ; and his fame was noised § throughout all the country.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass || in the accursed thing : for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing : and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

* The word here properly means "devoted."

‡ Laid them under a threat.

§ Spoken loudly.

† Set apart.

§

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up ; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai ; and make not all the people to labour thither ; for they are but few.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men : and they fled before the men of Ai.

And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men : for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down : wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

LESSON VIII.

ACHAN'S PUNISHMENT.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA vii. 6—26.

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us ? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan !

O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies !

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ * us round, and cut off our name from the earth : and what wilt thou do unto thy great name ?

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up ; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face ?

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them : for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled † also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. ‡

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed : neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow : for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel : thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes .

* Surround.

† Used falsehood.

‡ Goods.

and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment,* and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge† of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.‡

And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

* An embroidered garment such as was worked in Assyria.

† Tongue-shaped jewel.

‡ Causing trouble.

LESSON IX.

THE AMBUSH AGAINST AI.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA viii. (*abridged*).

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed : take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai : see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land :

And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king ; only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves : lay thee an ambush* for the city behind it.

So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai : and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night.

And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city : go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready :

And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city : and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us as at the first, that we will flee before them.

For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city ; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first : therefore we will flee before them.

Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city : for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire : according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.

And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they halted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain ; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.

And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.

And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them : and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city.

* Men put in hiding.

And there was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel : and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai ; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.

And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand : and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.

And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way : and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.

And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again and slew the men of Ai.

And the other issued* out of the city against them ; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side : and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide : and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

LESSON X.

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA viii. 30—35.

Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebai, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron : and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on

* Came out.

this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant* among them.

LESSON XI.

THE GIBEONITES.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA ix. 1—15.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea † over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

They did work wilily, ‡ and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, § and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, || old, and rent, and bound up;

And old shoes and clouted ¶ upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league ** with us.

And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.

* Who were on friendly terms with them.

† The Mediterranean.

‡ Skin bags.

§ Cunningly.

¶ Mended.

§ Messengers.

** Promise of friendship.

*

Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants : therefore now make ye a league with us.

This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you ; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy :

And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new ; and, behold, they be rent : and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live : and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

LESSON XII.

THE LEAGUE AGAINST GIBEON.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA ix. 16—x. 5.

And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.

And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel : now therefore we may not touch them.

This we will do to them ; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

And the princes said unto them, Let them live ; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation ; as the princes had promised them.

And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you ; when ye dwell among us ?

Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy

servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

And now, behold, we are in thine hand : as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it ; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king ; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them ;

That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

Wherefore Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon : for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

LESSON XIII.

THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON.

B.C. 1451.—JOSHUA x. 16—27.

And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand * from thy servants ; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us : for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not : for I have delivered them into thine hand ; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

And the LORD discomfited † them before Israel, and slew them with a

* Be not slow, lose not a moment.

† Defeated.

great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon,* and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died : they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ;
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.
And the sun stood still,
And the moon stayed,
Until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

Is not this written in the book of Jasher ?†

So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man : for the LORD fought for Israel.

And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them :

And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them ; suffer them not to enter into their cities : for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand.

And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced ‡ cities.

And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace : none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.

And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage : for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

* The Place of Caves.

† "The Just," a book of poetry.

‡ Fortified.

And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees : and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.

LESSON XIV.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE MEROM.

JOSHUA xi. 1—16.

B.C. 1451.—*The battle of Beth-horon gave Joshua the key of southern Palestine. With the high ground of Gibeon in his power he could master the cities whence the five kings had come in their first alarm, and all but Jebus, or Jerusalem, were immediately taken. The conquest was providentially rendered the easier for him by the fact that, during the forty years' wandering, Ramses III., king of Egypt, had made an incursion into Canaan, by the direct road which the Israelites had quitted for the desert of Paran, and had broken the strength of the Amorite nations. This king's ensign was a hornet, and it is now believed that the promise given to Moses, "I will send the hornet before you," refers to him, instead of to any plague of noxious insects, which was once supposed to be meant. These kings were chiefly Amorite, but there was another confederation forming against Joshua, among the Canaanite kings further north, in especial by him who dwelt at Hazor, or "the Fortress," near the reedy lake of Merom, not far from the source of the Jordan, and who, like all his line, was called Jabin ("the Wise").*

And it came to pass, when Jabin * king of Hazor† had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth,‡ and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people,

* The Wise.

† The Fortress.

‡ The Lake of Gennesareth.

even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched * together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough † their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.

But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.

And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same.

LESSON XV.

THE LOT OF JUDAH.

JOSHUA xiv. 6—14; xv. 14—19.

B.C. 1444.—*Joshua, with the Ark, the priests, and the camp, still abode at Gilgal as their head-quarters. The two great battles*

* Set up their tents.

† Cut the tendon of the leg.

had given the land to Israel, but it still remained for them to possess it, to take the towns and villages into their own hands, and to begin to sow corn, train vineyards, and live a settled life. Probably this was not a welcome change to men who had been used to rove freely with their tents, and who now seem to have levied contributions on the conquered country; besides, there was many a danger in the way. But a brave volunteer came forward to set the example.

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal : and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.

Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land ; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt : but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness : and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me : as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day ; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced : if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.

And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir : and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher.*

And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it : and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask

* The City of Books.

of her father a field : and she lighted off her ass ; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou ?

Who answered, Give me a blessing ; for thou hast given me a south land ; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether* springs.

LESSON XVI.

THE LOT OF JOSEPH.

B.C. 1444.—JOSH. xvi. 1—4 ; xvii. 13—18 ; xviii. 1 ; xxiv. 32.

And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el,

And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer : and the goings out thereof are at the sea.

So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute ; but did not utterly drive them out.

And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto ?

And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us : and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power : thou shalt not have one lot only :

But the mountain shall be thine ; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down : and the outgoings of it shall be thine : for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together

* Lower.

at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

* * * * *

And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver : and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

LESSON XVII.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

B.C. 1444—JOSH. xviii. 2—10 ; xix. 49—51.

And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you ?

Give out from among you three men for each tribe : and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them ; and they shall come again to me.

And they shall divide it into seven parts : Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north.

Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.

But the Levites have no part among you ; for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance : and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.

And the men arose, and went away : and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh.

And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh.

And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD : and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

* * * * *

When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them :

According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim : and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

LESSON XVIII.

THE FAREWELL TO THE TRIBES BEYOND JORDAN.

B.C. 1444.—JOSH. xxi. 43—45 ; xxii. 1—9.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers ; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers : and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them ; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel ; all came to pass.

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you :

Ye have not left your brethren these many days until this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them : therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

But take diligent heed * to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave† unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away : and they went unto their tents.

Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan : but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,

* Be very careful.

† Hold fast.

And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

LESSON XIX.

THE ALTAR OF WITNESS.

B.C. 1444.—JOSHUA xxii. 11—31.

And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.

And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,

And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,

But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.

Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against

the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God.

Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,)

That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require* it;

And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel?

For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD.

Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice:

But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD.

Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you.

God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that is before his tabernacle.

And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

* May He punish us.

LESSON XX.

YOSHUA'S WARNING.

B.C. 1427.—JOSHUA xxiii.

And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age :

And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you ; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you.

Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

And the LORD your God, he shall expel * them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight ; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left ;

That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you ; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them :

But cleave † unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong : but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

One man of you shall chase a thousand : for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant ‡ of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them :

Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you ; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges § in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

* Force out.

† Hold to.

‡ What is left.

§ Whips.

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth : and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you ; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you ; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them ; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

LESSON XXI.

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL.

B.C. 1427.—JOSHUA xxiv. 1, 14—31, 33.

And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers ; and they presented themselves before God.

* * * * *

[And Joshua rehearsed the mighty acts the LORD had done for them, and said,]

Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth : and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt ; and serve ye the LORD.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods which your fathers* served that were on the other side of the flood,† or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods ;

For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed :

And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwell in the land : therefore will we also serve the LORD ; for he is our God.

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD : for he is

* The parents of Abraham.

† The Euphrates.

an holy God ; he is a jealous God ; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

And the people said unto Joshua, Nay ; but we will serve the LORD.

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute* and an ordinance in Shechem.

And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us ; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us : it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

* * * * *

And Eleazar the son of Aaron died ; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

LESSON XXII.†

MICAHA'S IDOLATRY.

B.C. 1406.—JUDGES xvii. ; xviii. 1—10.

And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me ; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

* Law.

† Not for the younger readers.

And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image : now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

Yet he restored the money unto his mother ; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten* image : and they were in the house of Micah.

And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim,† and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there.

And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place : and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.

And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

And the Levite was content to dwell with the man ; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

And Micah consecrated the Levite ; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

In those days there was no king in Israel : and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in ; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it ; and they said unto them, Go, search the land : who, when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite : and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither ? and what makest thou in this place ? and what hast thou here ?

And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

And the priest said unto them, Go in peace : before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

* Melted.

† Little figures or charms.

Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.

When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.

LESSON XXIII.*

THE FOUNDATION OF DAN.

B.C. 1406.—JUDGES xviii. 11—31.

And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed† with weapons of war.

And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim,‡ in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan§ unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?

* Not for the younger ones.

Provided.

‡ The City of the Wood.

§ The Camp of Dan.

And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest : is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel ?

And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage* before them.

And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company ?

And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away : and what have I more ? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee ?

And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.

And the children of Dan went their way : and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure : and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man ; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel : howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

And the children of Dan set up the graven image : and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

* Waggon.

LESSON XXIV

THE ANGEL AT BOCHIM.

B.C. 1400.—JUDGES ii. 1—5, 11—23.

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?

Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

And they called the name of that place Bochim,* and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

* * * * *

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal † and Ashtaroth. ‡

And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the

* Weeping.

† The Sun-god.

‡ The Moon-goddess.

judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge : for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them ; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel ; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice ;

I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died :

That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily ; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

LESSON XXV.

DEBORAH AND BARAK.

JUDGES iv. 1—17.

B.C. 1296.—*The first great chastisement of the Israelites was one of the inroads of the kings of Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates. A king called in the Book of Judges Chusan-rishathaim conquered the country, but after eight years the brave Othniel, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, took the command of Israel, delivered the country from the enemy, and so ruled Israel that it was kept from idolatry, and had rest.*

But after Othniel's death there was another falling away, and this was punished by an invasion of the Moabites, from the other side of the Dead Sea, with the Ammonites and Amalekites. They overran the southern tribes, and forced them to pay a tribute for eighteen years, until Ehud the Benjamite, being sent to carry the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab, contrived to kill him, and in the confusion that followed freed the country for another period of rest, only broken by an attack from the Philistines in the south, when an Israelite named Shamgar, with no better weapon than the iron spike used for driving oxen, slew six hundred enemies.

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.

And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kadesh-naph-tali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.

And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaïm, which is by Kedesh.

And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

LESSON XXVI.

Jael and Sisera.

B.C. 1296.—JUDGES iv. 18—24 ; v. 1, 2, 24—31.

And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me ; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink ; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk,* and gave him drink, and covered him.

Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here ? that thou shalt say, No.

Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent,† and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground : for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.

So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.

And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves.

Blessed above women
Shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, and she gave him milk ;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workman's hammer ;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head,
When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell,

* A goatskin filled with buttermilk.

† Wooden peg for fastening the cords.

He lay down :
 At her feet he bowed, he fell :
 Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,
 And cried through the lattice,
 Why is his chariot so long in coming ?
 Why tarry the wheels of his chariots ?
 Her wise ladies answered her,
 Yea, she returned answer to herself,
 Have they not sped ? have they not divided the prey ;
 To every man a damsel or two ;
 To Sisera a prey of divers * colours,
 A prey of divers colours of needlework,
 Of divers colours of needlework on both sides,
 Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil ?
 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD :
 But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his
 might.

LESSON XXVII.

THE CALL TO GIDEON.

B.C. 1256.—JUDGES vi. 1—23.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD : and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel : and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,† even they came up against them ;

And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.

For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude ; for both they and their camels were without number : and they entered into the land to destroy it.

And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites ; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,

* Different.

† The Arabs.

That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage ;

And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land ;

And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God ; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but ye have not obeyed my voice.

And there came an angel * of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite : and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us ? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt ? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites : have not I sent thee ?

And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel ? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour : the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.

And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.

Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes ; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O LORD God ! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee ; fear not : thou shalt not die.

* Messenger.

LESSON XXVIII.

THE SIGNS GRANTED TO GIDEON.

B.C. 1256.—JUDGES vi. 24—40.

Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom*: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, and the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove† that is by it:

And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in order, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.

And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.

And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing.

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.

And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal,‡ saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.

And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,

* The Lord is peace.

† Properly the wooden image or tree of Ashtaroth.

‡ Let Baal plead.

Behold, I will put a fleece* of wool in the floor ; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.

And it was so : for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once : let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece ; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

And God did so that night : for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

LESSON XXIX.

THE MIDIANITE'S DREAM.

B.C. 1256.—JUDGES vii. 1—15.

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod :† so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand ; and there remained ten thousand.

And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many ; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there : and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee ; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

So he brought down the people unto the water : and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself ; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men : but all the rest of the people, bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped

* A sheepskin with the wool on.

† Trembling.

will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand : and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets : and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men : and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host ; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host :

And thou shalt hear what they say ; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude ; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.

And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.

And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel : for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise ; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

LESSON XXX.

THE TORCHES AND PITCHERS.

B.C. 1256.—JUDGES vii. 16—25 ; viii. 1—9.

And Gideon divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps* within the pitchers.

And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise : and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch ;† and they had

* Torches ; that is, sticks of resinous wood lighted.

† About ten at night.

but newly set the watch :* and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.

And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal : and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

And they stood every man in his place round about the camp : and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host : and the host fled to Beth-shittah† in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, ‡ unto Tabbath.

And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters§ unto Beth-barah|| and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.

And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb¶ and Zeeb ;** and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?

God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb : and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated†† toward him, when he had said that.

And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.

And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me ; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?

And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise : and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him.

And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

* Changed the guard.

† The House of Acacias.

‡ The Meadow of the Dance.

§ Watch the fords.

|| The House of Passage.

¶ The Raven.

** The Wolf

†† Lessened.

LESSON XXXI.

THE VICTORY.

JUDGES viii. 10—32.

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor,* and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east : for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.

And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host : for the host was secure.

And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up, And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him : and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men.

And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary ?

And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught † the men of Succoth.

And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor ? And they answered, As thou art, so were they ; each one resembled the children of a king.

And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother : as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.

And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword : for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us : for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments ‡ that were on their camels' necks.

Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also : for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you : the LORD shall rule over you.

And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye

* Level place.

† Chastised.

‡ Little moons.

would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.

And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold ; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.

And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah : and all Israel went thither after it : which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

And Gideon had threescore and ten sons : for he had many wives.

And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

LESSON XXXII.

NAOMI AND RUTH.

RUTH i.

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

And Elimelech Naomi's husband died ; and she was left, and her two sons.

And they took them wives of the women of Moab ; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth : and they dwelled there about ten years.

And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them ; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab : for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her ; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house : the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

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The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

And Ruth said,

Intreat me not to leave thee,
Or to return from following after thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge:
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God:
Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried:
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If ought but death part thee and me.

When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi,* call me Mara:† for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

LESSON XXXIII.

THE HARVEST AT BETHLEHEM.

RUTH ii.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech: and his name was Boaz.

And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field,

* Pleasant.

† Bitter.

and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers : and her hap * was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab :

And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves : so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter ? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens :

Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them : have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee ? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger ?

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband : and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity,† and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

The LORD recompense ‡ thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord ; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers : and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left §

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not :

And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned. and it was about an ephah || of barley.

And she took it up, and went into the city : and her mother-in-law saw

* Chance.

§ Had enough and some over.

† Birth.

|| About four gallons.

‡ Reward.

what she had gleaned : and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.*

And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day ? and where wroughtest † thou ? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.

And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest ; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

LESSON XXXIV.

THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF BOAZ.

RUTH iii.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee ?

And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast ? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.

Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor : but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in and uncover his feet ; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn ; and she came softly unto his feet.

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself :

And he said, Who art thou ? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid : spread therefore thy skirt ‡ over thine handmaid ; for thou art a near kinsman.

* The parched corn remaining from what Boaz had given her.

† Worked.

‡ Take under thy protection.

And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter : for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

And now, my daughter, fear not ; I will do to thee all that thou requirest : for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman : howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well ; let him do the kinsman's part : but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then I will do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth : lie down until the morning.

And early in the morning she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her : and she went into the city.

And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter ? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me ; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall : for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

LESSON XXXV.

THE MARRIAGE OF BOAZ AND RUTH.

RUTH iv. 1—17.

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there : and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by ; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one ! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down.

And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's.

And I thought to advertise* thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it : but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know : for there is none to redeem it beside thee ; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

* Inform.

E

Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar * mine own inheritance : redeem thou my right to thyself ; for I cannot redeem it.

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things ; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour : and this was a testimony in Israel.

Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place : ye are witnesses this day.

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel ; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, † and be famous in Beth-lehem :

And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife : and she bare a son.

And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age : for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi ; and they called his name Obed : he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

* Hurt.

† The fruitful ; the older name of Bethlehem.

LESSON XXXVI.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

JUDGES x. 10—18; xi. 1, 5—14, 28—31.

Two Judges, named Ibzan and Abdon, are next mentioned; but corruption was making way among the Israelites, and they betook themselves to all the idols of the surrounding nations, till great misery fell on them through the invasions of the Ammonites, who dwelt on the further side of Jordan, and not only vexed the tribes there, but crossed over to attack Ephraim and Judah. There was then a cry unto the Lord, but a stern answer came back.

And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.

And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines?

The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.

Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned; do thou unto us whatever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us, we pray thee, this day.

And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.

And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour.

And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah.

And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head?

And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.

Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them : and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land ?

And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan : now therefore restore those lands again peaceably.

And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon. [And they rehearsed unto him how the land had been taken from Sihon king of Heshbon.]

Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over * Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.

And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

LESSON XXXVII.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

JUDGES xi. 32—40 ; xii. 1—7.

So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them ; and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

And Jephthah came to Mizpeh † unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances : and she was his only child ; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said,

* Went through collecting men.

† The Watch-tower.

Alas, my daughter ! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me : for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth ; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.

And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me : let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.

And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months : and she went with her companions and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed. And it was a custom in Israel,

That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee ? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.

And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon ; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.

And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand : wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me ?

Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim ; and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites.

And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites : and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over ; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite ? If he said, Nay ;

Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth : * and he said Sibboleth : for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan : and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

* A stream.

LESSON XXXVIII.

HANNAH'S PETITION.

I SAMUEL i. 1—20.

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim,* of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite :

And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah : and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions :

But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; † for he loved Hannah : but she had no child.

And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret.

And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her ; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou ? and why eatest thou not ? and why is thy heart grieved ? am not I better to thee than ten sons ?

So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

Now Hannah, she spake in her heart ; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard ; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

* Ramah of the watchmen or the prophets.

† Parts of the peace-offering on which they feasted. Most likely the large quantity was to enable her to give to the widow, the poor, and the fatherless, who received portions of these feasts.

And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit : I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial : * for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace : and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah : and the LORD remembered Hannah.

Wherefore it came to pass that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, † saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

LESSON XXXIX.

THE DEDICATION OF SAMUEL.

I SAMUEL i. 21—28 ; ii. 1—10, 18—21.

And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

But Hannah went not up ; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good ; tarry until thou have weaned him ; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh : and the child was young.

And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

For this child I prayed ; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him :

Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

* A wicked, reprobate person.

† Asked of God.

And Hannah prayed, and said,
My heart rejoiceth in the LORD,
Mine horn is exalted in the LORD ;*
My mouth is enlarged † over mine enemies ;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
There is none holy as the LORD :
For there is none beside thee :
Neither is there any rock like our God.
Talk no more so exceeding proudly ;
Let not arrogancy ‡ come out of your mouth :
For the LORD is a God of knowledge,
And by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty men are broken,
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.
They that were full have hired out themselves for bread ;
And they that were hungry ceased :
So that the barren hath borne seven ;
And she that hath many children is waxed feeble.
The LORD killeth, and maketh alive :
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich :
He bringeth low, and lifteth up.
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,
To set them among princes,
And to make them inherit the throne of glory :
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,
And he hath set the world upon them.
He will keep the feet of his saints,
And the wicked shall be silent in darkness ;
For by strength shall no man prevail.
The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces :
Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them :
The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth ;
And he shall give strength unto his king,
And exalt the horn of his anointed.

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

* I am glad.

† Open wide in praise.

‡ Pride.

LESSON XL.

HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS.

I SAMUEL ii. 12—17 ; 22—36.

Now the sons of Eli were the sons of Belial : * they knew not the LORD.

And the priest's custom with the people was, that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething,† with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand :

And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot ; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest ; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth ; then he would answer him, Nay ; but thou shalt give it me now : and if not, I will take it by force.

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD : for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

* * * * *

Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel ;

And he said unto them, Why do ye such things ? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

Nay, my sons ; for it is no good report that I hear : ye make the LORD's people to transgress.

If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him : but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him ? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house ?

And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me ? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel ?

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have

* Emptiness—good-for-nothing men.

† Boiling.

commanded in my habitation ; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people ?

Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever : but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me ; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm,* and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel : and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart : and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas ; in one day they shall die both of them.

And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind : and I will build him a sure house ; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

LESSON XLI.

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON.

JUDGES xiii. 2—24.

And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah ; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren : but thou shalt bear a son.

Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing :

For, lo, thou shalt bear a son ; and no razor shall come on his head : for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God : and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible : but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name :

But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt bear a son ; and now drink no

[* Destroy thy strength.

wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing : for the child shall be a Nazarite to God to the day of his death.

Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah ; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field : but Manoah her husband was not with her.

And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman ? and he said, I am.

And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order* the child, and how shall we do unto him ?

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing : all that I commanded her let her observe.

And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread : and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD.

And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour ?

And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is Wonderful ? †

So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD : and He did wondrously ; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD.

And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would at this time have told us such things as these.

And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson : and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

* Treat.

† This is in the margin, and is the correct translation, though "secret" is in the text.

LESSON XLII.

THE CALL TO SAMUEL.

I SAM. iii. 1—21.

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious * in those days ; there was no open vision.

And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see ;

And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep ;

That the LORD called Samuel : and he answered, Here am I.

And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again.

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down : and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD ; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak ; for thy servant heareth.

And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house : when I begin, I will also make an end.

For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth ; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged † with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.

And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee ? I

* It was very seldom that the Lord spake to men.

† Purified.

pray thee hide it not from me : God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

And Samuel told him every whit,* and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD : let him do what seemeth him good.

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.†

And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh : for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

LESSON XLIII.

THE LOSS OF THE ARK.

I SAM. iv. 1—18.

The warnings at Mount Sinai and at Mount Pisgah had shown that, whenever the Israelites persisted in transgressing, their chastisement would increase in severity (Lev. xxvi., Deut. xxviii.). Hitherto the chief suffering had been from the forays of robber-tribes from the eastern frontier, but after many deliverances and many relapses into sin, an enemy was raised up more seriously bent on conquering and subduing than the unsettled wanderers who only wanted plunder. These were the Philistim, or, as we call them, Philistines, from whom the whole of Canaan acquired the name of Palestine. There had been Philistines in Abraham's time, and we are told that the nation came from Caphtor, which is believed to be the Island of Crete, and they are thought to have been of the European stock which came from Japhet, rather than Canaanites or of the Shemite (or Semitic) races of the desert. It was to avoid the Philistines that the Israelites had been brought through the eastern desert instead of by the direct road from Egypt, but the kings of Egypt were constantly at war with the Philistines and kept them down, so that for many years they did not molest the Israelites, except in the one attack that was beaten off by Shamgar and his ox-goad. But the power of Egypt fell, and that of the Philistines increased as fresh settlements joined them from Crete. Their dwelling-place was a fair breezy slope in the south, towards the Mediterranean, cutting off Judah, Simeon, and Dan from the

* Point.

† Be lost.

sea-coast, and containing five principal and very beautiful cities, Ashdod, Askelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza. Each of these five had lesser towns subject to them, and formed, not a kingdom, but a confederation, which was governed by a council of the magistrates of each city. Their religion seems to have partaken more of the Eastern than of the Western idolatries, for their chief deities were Ashtaroth, Baal-zebub, the God of flies, Dagon and Derceto, male and female idols with human heads and fishes' tails, all of whom the Phœnicians likewise worshipped. These Philistines were great sailors, and were always desirous of capturing the Israelites to sell as slaves; they were able and fierce warriors, and, though not among the doomed nations of Canaan, were terrible enemies when, recruited by fresh settlers from Crete, they began to attempt the conquest of the tribes.

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer : * and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel : and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines : and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims : and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us ! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

Woe unto us ! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods ? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

Be strong and quit † yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you : quit yourselves like men, and fight.

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent : and there was a very great slaughter ; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

* The Stone of Help.

† Behave.

And the ark of God was taken ; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching : for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult ? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son ?

And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died : for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

LESSON XLIV.

THE ARK IN PHILISTIA.

I SAM. v.; vi. I.

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod.

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD ; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold ; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he

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destroyed them, and smote them with disease, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us : for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel ? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.

And it was so, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction : and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, with a sore disease.

Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people : for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city ; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the cry of the city went up to heaven.

And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

LESSON XLV.

THE RETURN OF THE ARK.

I SAM. vi. 2—21 ; vii. 1—2.

And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD ? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty ; but in any wise return him a trespass offering : then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him ? They answered, Five golden jewels, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines : for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

Wherefore ye shall make images for your disease, and images of your mice that mar the land ; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel :

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peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought * wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer† by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.

And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their disease.

And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh,‡ and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.

And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

And these are the golden jewels which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel,§ whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.

And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

* Worked.
VOL. II.

† Box.

‡ The House of the Sun.
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§ Mourning.

And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

And the men of Kirjath-jearim * came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

LESSON XLVI.

SAMSON AND THE LION.

B.C. 1120.—JUDGES xiv.; xv. 1, 2.

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

* The City of the Woods.

And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you : if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets* and thirty change of garments :

But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

And he said unto them,

Out of the eater came forth meat,

And out of the strong came forth sweetness.

And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire : have ye called us to take that we have ? is it not so ?

And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not : thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee ?

And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted : and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she vexed him : and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

What is sweeter than honey ?

And what is stronger than a lion ?

And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid ; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in.

And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her ; therefore I gave her to thy companion : is not her younger sister fairer than she ? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

* Loose garments.

LESSON XLVII.

SAMSON'S EXPLOITS.

JUDGES xv. 3—19; xvi. 1—3.

And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes,* and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.

Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

And he smote them hip and thigh† with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

And when he came unto Lehi,‡ the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

* Jackals.

† A proverb for completely overcoming.

‡ So called afterwards.

And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.*

And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant : and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised ?

But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout ; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived : wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore,† which is in Lehi unto this day.

Then went Samson to Gaza. And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.

LESSON XLVIII.

SAMSON BETRAYED BY DELILAH.

B.C. 1140.—JUDGES xvi. 4—21.

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him ; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.

And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs‡ that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

* The lifting up of the jawbone.

† The well of him that called.

‡ Moist fresh-twisted willow boughs.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies : now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.

And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies : tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.

And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.

And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death ;

That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head ; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my birth : if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

And she made him sleep upon her knees ; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head ; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass ; and he did grind in the prison house.

LESSON XLIX.

THE DEATH OF SAMSON.

B.C. 1140.—JUDGES xvi. 22—31.

Howbeit the hair of Samson's head began to grow again after he was shaven.

Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a

great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice : for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

And when the people saw him, they praised their god : for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house ; and he made them sport : and they set him between the pillars.

And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

Now the house was full of men and women ; and all the lords of the Philistines were there ; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might ; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

LESSON L.

THE RESTORATION BY SAMUEL.

B.C. 1140.—I SAM. vii. 3—17.

And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only : and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD : and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel ; and the LORD heard him.

And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel : but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them ; and they were smitten before Israel.

And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.*

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer,† saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel : and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath ; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

And he went from year to year in circuit‡ to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

And his return was to Ramah ; for there was his house ; and there he judged Israel ; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

* The House of the Lamb.

† Went round.

‡ The Stone of Help.

LESSON LI.

THE ISRAELITES ASK A KING.

B.C. 1095.—I SAM. viii.

And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

Now the name of his firstborn was Joel ; and the name of his second, Abiah : they were judges in Beer-sheba.

And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways : now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

Now therefore hearken unto their voice : howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you : He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen ; and some shall run before his chariots.

And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties ; and will set them to ear* his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries,† and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

He will take the tenth of your sheep : and ye shall be his servants.

* Till.

† Make sweetmeat—probably with honey.

And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you ; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel ; and they said, Nay ; but we will have a king over us ;

That we also may be like all the nations ; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

LESSON LII.

THE APPOINTMENT OF SAUL.

B.C. 1095.—I SAM. ix. 1—25.

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly : and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he : from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not : then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not : and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.

And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return ; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man ; all that he saith cometh surely to pass : now let us go thither ; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man ? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God : what have we ?

And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver : that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

(Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer : for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

Then said Saul to his servant, Well said ; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here ?

And they answered them, and said, He is ; behold, he is before you : make haste now, for he came to-day to the city ; for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place.*

As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat : for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice ; and afterwards they eat that be bidden.† Now therefore get ye up ; for about this time ye shall find him.

And they went up into the city : and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines : for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of ! this same shall reign over my people.

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer : go up before me unto the high place ; for ye shall eat with me to-day, and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them ; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel ? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house ?

And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel ? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin ? wherefore then speakest thou so to me ?

And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour,‡ and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left ! set it before thee, and eat : for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

* The hill above the town.

† Invited

‡ The place of assembly in an inn or caravanserai.

LESSON LIII.

THE ANOINTING OF SAUL.

B.C. 1095.—1 SAM. ix. 26, 27; x. 1—16.

As they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

After that thou shalt come to the hill* of God, where is the garrison † of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: ‡

And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

* Gibeah.

† A fort with soldiers in it.

‡ Sing hymns of praise.

And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him ; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish ? Is Saul also among the prophets ?

And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father ? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets ?

And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye ? And he said, To seek the asses : and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel.

And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.

And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

LESSON LIV.

THE CHOICE OF SAUL.

B.C. 1095.—I SAM. x. 17—27 ; xi. 1—11.

And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh ;

And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you :

And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations ; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken : and when they sought him, he could not be found.

Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.*

And they ran and fetched him thence : and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

* Among the baggage.

And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

And Saul also went home to Gibeah : and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead : and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel : and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people : and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field ; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh ; and they were glad.

Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies ; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day : and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

LESSON LV.

SAMUEL'S WARNING.

B.C. 1095.—I SAM. xi. 12—15; xii. 1—7, 13—25.

And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD: and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe* to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced † Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the

* A present made to a person in authority to buy his favour or hinder him from seeing on which side the right lies.

† Put forward.

... then shall the hand of the LORD be against
 ... and see this great thing, which the LORD will do
 ... I will call unto the LORD, and he shall
 ... that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness
 ... ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you
 ... Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain
 ... and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.
 ... the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the
 ... God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this
 ... to ask us a king.
 ... Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this
 ... wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the
 ... LORD with all your heart;
 ... And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which
 ... cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.
 ... For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake:
 ... because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.
 ... Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in
 ... ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:
 ... Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for
 ... consider how great things he hath done for you.
 ... But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and
 ... your king.

LESSON LVI.

SAUL'S FIRST DISOBEDIENCE.

B.C. 1093.—I SAM. xiii. 1—14.

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,*

Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

* Probably in the second year of his reign.

And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude : and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait,* (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed : but Samuel came not to Gilgal ; and the people were scattered from him.

And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came ; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash ;

Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD : I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee : for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue : the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

* In difficulty.

LESSON LVII.

JONATHAN'S VENTURE.

B.C. 1094.—I SAMUEL xiv. 1—15.

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father.

And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;

And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez,* and the name of the other Seneh.†

The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

And his armour-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.

And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armour-bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him.

* Shining.

† Either a tooth or a thorn.

And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.

And there was a trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

LESSON LVIII.

THE ROUT OF MICHMASH.

B.C. 1094.—I SAMUEL xiv. 16—35.

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.

Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there.

And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.

And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture.

Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.

And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured* the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.

And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey

* Laid an oath on.

dropped ; but no man put his hand to his mouth : for the people feared the oath.

But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath : wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth ; and his eyes were enlightened.

Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint.

Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land : see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened,* because I tasted a little of this honey.

How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?

And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon : and the people were very faint.

And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground : and the people did eat them with the blood.

Then they told Saul, saying, Behold the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed : roll a great stone unto me this day.

And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat ; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there.

And Saul built an altar unto the LORD : the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

LESSON LIX.

THE RASH VOW OF SAUL.

B.C. 1094.—I SAMUEL xiv. 36—52.

And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.

•

* I have been refreshed.

And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people : and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.

Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken : but the people escaped.

And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.

And Saul answered, God do so and more also : for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid : as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground ; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

Then Saul went up from following the Philistines : and the Philistines went to their own place.

So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines : and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them.

And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua : and the names of his two daughters were these ; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal :

And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz : and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

And Kish was the father of Saul ; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul : and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

And Samuel said unto him,

The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day,

And hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent :

For he is not a man, that he should repent.

Then he said, I have sinned : yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God.

So Samuel turned again after Saul ; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

And Samuel said,

As thy sword hath made women childless,

So shall thy mother be childless among women.

And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Then Samuel went to Ramah ; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.

And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death ; nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul : and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

LESSON LXII.

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID.

R.C. 1068.—I SAMUEL xvi. 1—13.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite : for I have provided me a king among his sons.

And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do : and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD : sanctify

yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David* from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

LESSON LXIII.

DAVID SOOTHING SAUL.

B.C. 1065.—I SAM. xvi. 14—23.

But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning† player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son

* Beloved.

† Skilful.

of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer.

And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

LESSON LXIV.

GOLIATH'S DEFIANCE.

B.C. 1063.—I SAM. xvii. 1—19.

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.*

And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail;† and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

And he had greaves‡ of brass upon his legs, and a target§ of brass between his shoulders.

And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam;|| and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

* About ten feet altogether. † Scales of brass. ‡ Buskins guarded with brass.
§ Plate. || The great bar to which the web was hung.

If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare,* and take their pledge.†

Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

LESSON LXV.

DAVID THE CHAMPION.

B.C. 1063.—I SAM. xvii. 20—39.

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

And David left his carriage‡ in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

* See how they do.

† Bring home a token.

‡ What he carried.

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness * of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed † to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

* Foolishness.

† Tried.

LESSON LXVI.

THE SLAYING OF GOLIATH.

(ABOUT B.C. 1063.)—I SAMUEL xvii. 40—54.

And David took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with the sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

And the men of Israel and Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And

*

the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ; but he put his armour in his tent.

LESSON LXVII.

SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID.

B.C. 1063.—I SAM. xvii. 55—58; xviii. 1—11.

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling* is.

And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely : and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets,† with joy, and with instruments of musick.

And the women answered one another as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him ; and he said,

* Young lad.

† Timbrels.

They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands : and what can he have more but the kingdom ?

And Saul eyed * David from that day and forward.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house : and David played with his hand, as at other times : and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

And Saul cast the javelin ; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided † out of his presence twice.

LESSON LXVIII.

DAVID'S MARRIAGE.

B.C. 1062.—I SAM. xviii. 12—30.

And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand ; and he went out and came in before the people.

And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways ; and the LORD was with him.

Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife : only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

And David said unto Saul, Who am I ? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king ?

But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholahite to wife.

And Michal Saul's daughter loved David : and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.

And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee : now therefore be the king's son-in-law.

And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David

* Watched with dislike.

† Escaped.

said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry,* but the death of a hundred Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law: and the days were not expired.

Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

LESSON LXIX.

DAVID'S FLIGHT.

B.C. 1062.—I SAM. xix. 1—17.

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:

And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good:

For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

* Marriage gift

And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan : and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

And there was war again : and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter ; and they fled from him.

And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand : and David played with his hand.

And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin ; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall : and David fled, and escaped that night.

Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning : and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.

So Michal let David down through a window : and he went, and fled, and escaped.

And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.

And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick.

And Saul sent the messengers again to David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped ? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go ; why should I kill thee ?

LESSON LXX.

THE SCHOOL OF PROPHETS.

B.C. 1060.—I SAM. xix. 18—24 ; xx. 1 —10.

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.*

And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.

And Saul sent messengers to take David : and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,† and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

* The dwellings or cottages.

† Singing hymns.

And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu : and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David ? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah.

And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah : and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

And he stripped off his clothes * also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked † all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets ?

And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done ? what is mine iniquity ? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life ?

And he said unto him, God forbid ; thou shalt not die : behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me : and why should my father hide this thing from me ? it is not so.

And David swore moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes ; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved : but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat : but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city : for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

If he say thus, It is well ; thy servant shall have peace : but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant ; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee : notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself ; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father ?

And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee : for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee ?

Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me ? or what if thy father answer thee roughly ?

* Royal robe.

† Without his upper garment.

LESSON LXXI.

SAUL'S NEW-MOON FEAST.

B.C. 1060.—I SAM. xx. 11—34.

And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee ;

The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan : but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace : and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not :

But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever : no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him : for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow is the new moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.*

And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them ; then come thou : for there is peace to thee, and no hurt ; as the LORD liveth.

But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee ; go thy way : for the LORD hath sent thee away.

And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

So David hid himself in the field : and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

* Which sheweth the way.

And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall : and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

Nevertheless Saul spake not anything that day : for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean ; surely he is not clean.

And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty : and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?

And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem :

And he said, Let me go, I pray thee ; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city ; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there : and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion ?

For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain ? what hath he done ?

And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him : whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month : for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

LESSON LXXII.

THE SHEWBREAD.

B.C. 1060.—I SAM. xx. 35—xxi. 9.

And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee ?

And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

But the lad knew not anything : only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

And Jonathan gave his artillery* unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times : and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed : and Jonathan went into the city.

Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest : and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee ?

And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee ; and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

Now therefore what is under thine hand ? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread.

So the priest gave him hallowed bread : for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD ; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword ? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod : if thou wilt take that, take it : for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that : give it me.

LESSON LXXIII.

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

B.C. 1060.—1 SAM. xxi. 10—15 ; xxii. 1—5 ; 2 SAM. xxiii. 13—17.

And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of

* Weapons.

the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrambled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad : wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam : and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him ; and he became a captain over them : and there were with him about four hundred men.

And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab : and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.

And he brought them before the king of Moab : and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold ; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam : and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate!

And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and brought it to David : nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this : is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it.

LESSON LXXIV.

DAVID'S SONG OF TRUST.

B.C. 1060.—PSALM xxxiv.

I will alway give thanks unto the LORD :
 His praise shall ever be in my mouth.
 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD :
 The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
 O praise the LORD with me,
 And let us magnify his name together.
 I sought the LORD, and he heard me :
 Yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.
 They had an eye unto him, and were lightened :
 And their faces were not ashamed.
 Lo, the poor crieth, and the LORD heareth him :
 Yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.
 The angel of the LORD tarrieth round about them that fear him,
 And delivereth them.

O taste, and see, how gracious the LORD is :
 Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
 O fear the LORD, ye that are his saints :
 For they that fear him lack * nothing.
 The lions do lack, and suffer hunger :
 But they who seek the LORD shall want no manner of thing that is
 good.

Come, ye children, and hearken unto me :
 I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
 What man is he that lusteth† to live : and would fain‡ see good
 days?

Keep thy tongue from evil :
 And thy lips, that they speak no guile.§
 Eschew|| evil, and do good :
 Seek peace, and ensue¶ it.

The eyes of the LORD are over the righteous,
 And his ears are open unto their prayers.
 The countenance of the LORD is against them that do evil :
 To root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

* Want.
 § Deceit.

† Wisheth.
 || Avoid.

‡ Gladly.
 ¶ Follow.

The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth them,
And delivereth them out of all their troubles.
The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a contrite* heart ;
And will save such as be of an humble spirit.
Great are the troubles of the righteous :
But the LORD delivereth him out of all.
He keepeth all his bones,
So that not one of them is broken.
But misfortune shall slay the ungodly :
And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

The LORD delivereth the souls of his servants :
And all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitute.†

LESSON LXXV.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS.

B.C. 1060.—I SAM. xxii. 6—23.

When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him ;))

Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites ; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds ;

That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ?

Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob : and they came all of them to the king.

And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ?

* Bruised with repentance.

† In want.

Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house ?

Did I then begin to enquire of God for him ? be it far from me : let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father : for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD ; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul : I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.

Abide thou with me, fear not : for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life : but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

LESSON LXXVI.

THE DELIVERANCE OF KEILAH.

B.C. 1061.—I SAM. xxiii. 1—13.

Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors.

Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines ? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah : how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines ?

Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered

him, and said, Arise, go down to Keilah ; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.

And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand ; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him ; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.

Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah : and he forbore to go forth.

LESSON LXXVII.

THE TREACHERY OF THE ZIPHITES.

B.C. 1059.—I SAM. xxiii. 14—28.

And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life : and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

And he said unto him, Fear not : for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee ; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee ; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

And they two made a covenant before the LORD : and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? *

Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.

And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there : for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly.

See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you : and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul : but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David : wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain : and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul : for Saul and his men compassed † David and his men round about to take them.

But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come ; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines : therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth. ‡

LESSON LXXVIII.

THE CAVE OF ENGADDI.

B.C. 1059.—I SAMUEL xxiii. 29 ; xxiv.

And David went up, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.

Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

And he came to the sheepcotes § by the way, where was a cave ;

* The Wilderness.

† Surrounded.

‡ The rock of escapings.

§ Folds built up with stones.

and Saul went in : and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.*

And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave : and some bade me kill thee : but mine eye spared thee ; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord ; for he is the LORD's anointed.

Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand : for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee ; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee : but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

As saith the proverb of the ancients,† Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked : but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

After whom is the king of Israel come out ? after whom dost thou pursue ? after a dead dog, after a flea.

The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David ? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I : for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me : forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away ? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off

* Secretly.

† The saying of old time.

my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

And David swore unto Saul. And Saul went home ; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

LESSON LXXIX.

THE CHURLISHNESS OF NABAL.

B.C. 1059.—I SAM. xxv. 1—19.

And Samuel died ; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel ; * and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats : and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Now the name of the man was Nabal ; and the name of his wife Abigail : and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance : but the man was churlish and evil in his doings ; and he was of the house of Caleb.

And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name :

And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

And now I have heard that thou hast shearers : now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes : for we come in a good day : give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master.

Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be ?

So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And

* The Park.

they girded on every man his sword ; and David also girded on his sword : and there went up after David about four hundred men ; and two hundred abode by the stuff.*

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master ; and he railed on them.

But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we were conversant† with them, when we were in the fields :

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do ; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household : for he is such a son of Belial‡ that a man cannot speak to him.

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles § of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

And she said unto her servants, Go on before me ; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

LESSON LXXX.

ABIGAIL'S INTERCESSION.

B.C. 1059.—I SAM. xxv. 20—44.

And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert | of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her ; and she met them.

Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him : and he hath requited me evil for good.

So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any man of his house.

And when Abigail saw David, she hastened and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be : and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience,¶ and hear the words of thine handmaid.

Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal : for as

* Remained to protect the baggage.

† Man of nothing.

‡ Sheltered side.

§ Had to do with them.

¶ Skins.

¶ Hearing.

his name is, so is he ; Nabal * is his name, and folly is with him : but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid : for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house ; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul : but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God : and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel ;

That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself : but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me :

And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any man of his house.

So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house ; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

And Abigail came to Nabal ; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king ; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken : wherefore she told him nothing less or more, until the morning light.

But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal that he died.

And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil : for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

* Fool ; a weak, silly man.

And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee to take thee to him to wife.

And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.

LESSON LXXXI.

SAUL'S SPEAR.

1 SAM. xxvi. 5—25.

B.C. 1059.—*A second time did the treacherous men of Ziph send to inform Saul of David's being in their neighbourhood, and Saul set forth against him, accompanied by Abner, the captain of his army, and a troop of warriors.*

And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench,* and the people pitched round about him.

Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; but Abner and the people lay round about him.

Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?

David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

* Among the waggons.

The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed : but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse* of water, and let us go.

So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster ; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked : for they were all asleep ; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them :

Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off ; a great space being between them :

And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner ? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king ?

And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man ? and who is like to thee in Israel ? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king ? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David ? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant ? for what have I done ? or what evil is in mine hand ?

Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering : but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD ; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD : for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

Then said Saul, I have sinned : return, my son David : for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul† was precious in thine eyes this day : behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear ! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness : for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David : thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

* Jar.

† Life.

LESSON LXXXII.

DAVID AT ZIKLAG.

B.C. 1058.—1 SAM. xxvii. ; 1 CHRON. xii. 1, 2 ; 1 SAM. xxviii. 1, 2.

And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul : there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel : so shall I escape out of his hand.

And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath : and he sought no more again for him.

And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there : for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee ?

Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day : wherefore Ziklag pertaineth* unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

[Now there came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish : and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.]

And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites : for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road† to day ? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

*

* Belongs.

† An inroad, or attack.

And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him ; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

LESSON LXXXIII.

THE AMALEKITE FORAY ON ZIKLAG.

B.C. 1055.—I SAM. xxix. ; xxx. 1—6.

Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek : and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands : but David and his men passed on in the rereward* with Achish.

Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here ? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day ?

And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him ; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us : for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master ? should it not be with the heads of these men ? †

Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands ?

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight : for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day : nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

And David said unto Achish, But what have I done ? and what hast

* The guard in the rear, or behind.

† How better should he buy his pardon from Saul than by betraying them ?

thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God : notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee : and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire ;

And had taken the women captives, that were therein : they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire ; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

And David was greatly distressed ; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters : but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

LESSON LXXXIV.

THE PURSUIT.

B.C. 1055.—1 SAM. xxx. 7—26.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue : for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

But David pursued, he and four hundred men : for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat ; and they made him drink water ;

And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins : and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him : for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

And David said unto him, To whomst belondest thou ? and whence art thou ? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite ; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb ; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company ? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day : and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.

And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away : and David rescued his two wives.

And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them : David recovered all.

And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor : and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him : and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.

Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart.

Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.

For who will hearken unto you in this matter ? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff : they shall part alike.

And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD.

LESSON LXXXV.

THE PROPHETICAL THANKSGIVING.

B.C. 1055.—PSALM xl.

I waited patiently for the LORD ;
And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God :
Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.
Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust,
And respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast
done,
And thy thoughts, which are to us-ward :
They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee :
If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be
numbered.
Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ;
Mine ears hast thou opened :
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I come :
In the volume of the book it is written of me,
I delight to do thy will, O my God :
Yea, thy law is within my heart.
I have preached righteousness in the great congregation :
Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.
I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart ; *
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation :
I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great
congregation.
Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD :
Let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.
For innumerable evils have compassed me about :
Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to
look up ;
They are more than the hairs of mine head : therefore my heart
faileth me.
Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me :

* I have made it known.

O LORD, make haste to help me.
Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my
soul to destroy it ;
Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.
Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me,
Aha, Aha.
Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee :
Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be mag-
nified.
But I am poor and needy ; yet the LORD thinketh upon me :
Thou art my help and my deliverer ;
Make no tarrying, O my God.

LESSON LXXXVI.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

B.C. 1055.—I SAM. xxviii. 3—25.

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem : and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night : and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land : wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die ?

And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee ? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

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And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice : and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid : for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams : therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me : for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David :

Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines : and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me : the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel : and there was no strength in him ; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee ; and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way.

But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him ; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

And the woman had a fat calf in the house ; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof :

And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants ; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

LESSON LXXXVII.

THE BATTLE OF MOUNT GILBOA.

B.C. 1055.—1 SAM. xxxi. 1—12 ; 2 SAM. iv. 4 ; 1 CHRON. x. 10, 11.

Now the Philistines fought against Israel : and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons ; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons.

And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him ; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith ; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not ; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled ; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth : and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan, and his head in the temple of Dagon.*

And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul ;

All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled : and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD,

* From the Book of Chronicles.

even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it ;

And enquired not of the LORD : therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

LESSON LXXXVIII.

THE TIDINGS TO DAVID.

B.C. 1055.—2 SAM. i. 1—16.

Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag ;

It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head : and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

And David said unto him, From whence comest thou ? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

And David said unto him, How went the matter ? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead ; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead ?

And the young man that told him said, As I happened* by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear ; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.

And he said unto me, Who art thou ? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me : for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen : and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them ; and likewise all the men that were with him :

And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel ; because they were fallen by the sword.

* Came.

And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?

And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him, that he died.

And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

LESSON LXXXIX.

DAVID KING AT HEBRON.

B.C. 1055 TO 1050.—2 SAM. ii. 1—17.

And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.

And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon : and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side ; so they fell down together : wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim,* which is in Gibeon.

And there was a very sore battle that day ; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

LESSON XC.

THE PURSUIT FROM GIBEON.

B.C. 1050.—2 SAM. ii. 18—32 ; iii. 1, 2, 6.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel : and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.

And Asahel pursued after Abner ; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.

And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me : wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold-up my face to Joab thy brother?

Howbeit he refused to turn aside : wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him ; and he fell down there, and died in the same place : and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner : and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

* The field of heroes.

And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron,* and they came to Mahanaim.

And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.

And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed† stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

And unto David were sons born in Hebron:

And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

LESSON XCI.

THE DEATH OF ABNER.

B.C. 1048.—2 SAM. iii. 7—30.

And Saul had a concubine,‡ whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

To translate§ the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheva.

And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

* The grove.

† Fortane.

‡ Inferior wife.

§ Transfer, or take from one to give to the other.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred Philistines.

And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you:

Now then do it: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast.

And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew it not.

And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

And afterward when David heard it, he said,

I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever
From the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house;
And let there not fail from the house of Joab

One that is a leper,
Or that leaneth on a staff,
Or that falleth on the sword,
Or that lacketh bread.

So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier.

And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner: and all the people wept.

And the king lamented over Abner, and said,

Died Abner as a fool dieth?
Thy hands were not bound,
Nor thy feet put into fetters:
As a man falleth before wicked men,
So fellest thou.

And all the people wept again over him.

And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.

And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

LESSON XCII.

DAVID KING OVER ISRAEL.

B.C. 1048.—2 SAM. iv. and 1 CHRON. xiii. collated.

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin:

And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and

came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat ; and they smote him under the fifth rib : and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life ; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings :

How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed ? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth ?

And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

* * * * *

Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel : and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.

Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron ; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD ; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel : and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.

And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking : for their brethren had prepared for them.

Moreover they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly : for there was joy in Israel.

LESSON XCIII.

THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM.

B.C. 1048.—2 SAM. v. *with* 1 CHRON. xi.

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land : which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither : thinking, David cannot come in hither.

Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion : the same is the city of David.

And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain.

So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.

And David dwelt in the castle ; therefore they called it the city of David.

And he built the city round about, even from Millo* round about : and Joab repaired the rest of the city.

So David waxed greater and greater : for the LORD of hosts was with him.

And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons : and they built David an house.

And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David ; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.†

And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines ? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand ? And the LORD said unto David, Go up : for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

And David came to Baal-perazim,‡ and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up ;

* The tower or citadel. † The giants. ‡ The plain of bursts of destruction.

but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going* in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself : for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him ; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

LESSON XCIV.

THE SIN OF UZZA.

B.C. 1047.—1 CHRON. xiii.

And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.

And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us :

And let us bring again the ark of our God to us : for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul.

And all the congregation said that they would do so : for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.

And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.

And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab : and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.

And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon,† Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark : for the oxen stumbled.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him because he put his hand to the ark : and there he died before God.

And David was displeased,‡ because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza : wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza § to this day.

And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me ?

* Rustling. † The stroke. ‡ Grieved. § The breaking forth of Uzza

So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

LESSON XCV.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO MOUNT ZION.

B.C. 1047.—2 SAM. vi. *with* 1 CHRON. xv. xvi.

And it was told King David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.

And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites : for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites,

And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites : sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.

For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach* upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.

And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.

And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.

And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers : David also had upon him an ephod of linen.

* Brake forth in anger.

Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing : and she despised him in her heart.

So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it : and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God.

And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself.

And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel : therefore will I play before the LORD.

And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight : and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

LESSON XCVI.

THE BEGINNING OF PSALMODY.

B.C. 1047.—I CHRON. xvi. 4—9, 29—43.

And David appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record,* and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel :

Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom : and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps ; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals ;

Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

* To keep God's great works in mind.

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name,
Make known his deeds among the people.
Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him,
Talk ye of all his wondrous works.

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name ;
Bring an offering, and come before him :
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
Fear before him, all the earth :
The world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice :
And let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof :
Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD,
Because he cometh to judge the earth.
O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation,
And gather us together,
And deliver us from the heathen,
That we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.
Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever.

And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required :

And Obed-edom with their brethren, threescore and eight ; Obed-edom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah to be porters :

And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that was at Gibeon,

To offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt-offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel ;

And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever ;

And with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were porters.

And all the people departed every man to his house : and David returned to bless his house.

LESSON XCVII.

THE PROMISE TO DAVID.

B.C. 1047.—2 SAM. vii. 1—17.

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies ;

That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart ; for the LORD is with thee.

And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in ?

Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar ?

Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel :

And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.

Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more ; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before-time,

And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men,* and with the stripes of the children of men :

* Punish him like other men.

But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee : thy throne shall be established for ever.

According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

LESSON XCVIII.

DAVID'S VICTORIES.

B.C. 1047.—2 SAM. vii. 18—29; 1 CHRON. xviii.

Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O LORD God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O LORD God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O LORD God?

And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, LORD God, knowest thy servant.

For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou LORD, art become their God.

And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house:* therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

And now, O LORD God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it

* Raise up thy family.

may continue for ever before thee : for thou, O LORD God, hast spoken it : and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

* * * * *

Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates.

And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

Then David put garrisons * in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all these nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of Salt eighteen thousand.

And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

LESSON XCIX.

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH.

2 SAMUEL ix.

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

And there was of the house of Saul, a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was

* Soldiers in their fortresses.

come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant !

And David said unto him, Fear not : for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father : and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am ?

Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat : but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem : for he did eat continually at the king's table ; and was lame on both his feet.

LESSON C.

THE VENGEANCE OF THE GIBEONITES.

2 SAMUEL xxi. 1—14.

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year ; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them ; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites ; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them : and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah).

Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you ? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD ?

And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house ; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.

And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholahite:

And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa:

And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated* for the land.

LESSON CI.

DAVID'S SIN.

2 SAM. xi. (*abridged.*)

B.C. 1034.—*The most severe of David's wars was with the Ammonites, who, like Moab, were descendants of Lot. On the death of Nahash, King of Ammon, who had been kind to him in his wanderings, David had sent ambassadors to compliment Hanun on his accession, but the new king listened to foolish counsellors, who persuaded him that the message was only a pretext for coming to spy out the land, and the friendly messengers were treated with the utmost indignity, their flowing robes cut short off, and their beards, the pride of the heart of an Oriental, shaven on one side of their faces. Word was sent to David, before whom the disgraced*

* Prayer prevailed to have the famine removed.

men were ashamed to show themselves, and he bade them remain at Jericho until their beards should be grown again. The Ammonites, perceiving that their insult must lead to war, hired two bodies of Syrians to assist them, but they were defeated in one great battle by the brothers Joab and Abishai, and when further reinforcements of Syrians were brought up from beyond the Euphrates, David himself crossed the Jordan, totally defeated them, reduced them to pay tribute, and deprived the Ammonites of their help. These ancient wars were almost always conducted in single campaigns in the spring of each year, both parties returning to their cities for the rainy season, and when the season came round again, the attack upon the Ammonites was resumed.

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass in an evening-tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers and took her.

And it came to pass that David wrote a letter to Joab,

And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war.

And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? * did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.

And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

* Gideon, i.e. Jerubbaal. "Bosheth," or "Shame," is used to stand for Baal.

And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants ; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another : make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it : and encourage thou him.

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

LESSON CII.

NATHAN'S REBUKE TO DAVID.

B.C. 1033.—2 SAM. xii. 1—15.

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city ; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds :

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring* man that was come unto him ; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man ; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die :

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul ;

And I gave thee thy master's house, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah ; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight ? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house ;† because

* Travelling.

† There should be continual bloodshed in his family.

thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour.

For thou didst it secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die.

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

And Nathan departed unto his house.

LESSON CIII.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF CONTRITION.

B.C. 1033.—PSALM li.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness :
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my
transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions :
And my sin is ever before me.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in
thy sight :

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ;
And in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts :
And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness ;

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins,

And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God ;

And renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence ;
And take not thy holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,
And uphold me with thy free spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways ;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation :
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O LORD, open thou my lips ;
And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it :
Thou delightest not in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :
A broken and a contrite * heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion :
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering :
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

LESSON CIV.

THE DEATH OF DAVID'S CHILD.

B.C. 1033.—2 SAM. xii. 15—25.

And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David therefore besought God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice : how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ?

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped :

* Worn down with grief.

then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon : * and the LORD loved him.

And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet ; and he called his name Jedidiah,† because of the LORD.

LESSON CV.

EXPLOITS OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN.

B.C. 1033.—2 SAM. xii. 26—31 ; xxi. 15—17 ; 1 CHRON. xx. 4—8.

And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it : lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones : and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln : and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel ; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines : and David waxed faint.

And Ishbi-benob,‡ which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine,

* Peaceful.

† Beloved of the Lord.

‡ Inhabitant of the high place.

and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

And it came to pass after this, that there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai, that was of the children of the giant: and they were subdued.

And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam.

And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot: and he also was the son of the giant.

But when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, slew him.

These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

LESSON CVI.

THE DEATH OF AMNON.

2 SAM. xiii. 23—39.

B.C. 1030.—Five years passed since the crime of David, and not without honour and glory. He may have hoped that his prayers and tears had won the remission of the sentence of constant bloodshed in his house, and foes rising out of his own family, at least during his own life. But his many marriages, and the jealousies among his proud and lawless sons, were bringing about the evil. Abigail's son had probably died, for at the head of the family stood Amnon and Absalom the mother of the latter being daughter of a petty king to the north-east of Bashan. A cruel insult was offered by Amnon to Tamar, the sister of Absalom by the same mother, and after long brooding over it, and finding that his father would not avenge it, Absalom thus took the law into his own hands.

And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.

And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined.

Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him.

And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.

And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.

So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

LESSON CVII.

THE RECALL OF ABSALOM.

B.C. 1027.—2 SAM. xiv. 1—24.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now

mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead :

And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew ; and we will destroy the heir also : and so they shall quench my coal* which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth.

And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.

And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God ? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty,† in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ; neither doth God respect‡ any person : yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid : and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king ; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable : for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad : therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this ? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king

* Embers, or lighted wood.

† Convicts himself of unkindness. ‡ Make any difference on behalf of rank or station.

hath spoken : for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words into the mouth of thine handmaid :

To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing : and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing : go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king : and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

LESSON CVIII.

ABSALOM'S TREASON.

B.C. 1027-24.—2 SAM. xiv. 25—xv. 6.

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty ; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

And when he polled * his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it : because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it :) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar : she was a woman of a fair countenance.

So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king ; but he would not come to him : and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there ; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire ?

And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur ? it had been good for me to have been there still : now

* Cut his hair.

therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.

So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy* came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

LESSON CIX.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xv. 7—29.

And it came to pass that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

And Absalom sent for Ahithophel† the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

* Dispute.

† The Brother of Folly.

And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee ; for we shall not else escape from Absalom : make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.*

And all his servants passed on beside him ; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us ? return to thy place, and abide with the king : for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us ? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren : mercy and truth be with thee.

And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over : the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron,† and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God : and they set down the ark of God ; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation :

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer ? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem : and they tarried there.

* A house outside the walls.

† The Dark.

LESSON CX.

DAVID ON MOUNT OLIVET.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xv. 30—xvi. 14.

And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits,* and a bottle† of wine.

And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

* Dates.

† Large skin.

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.

Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD hath bidden him.

It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

LESSON CXI.

MORNING AND EVENING HYMNS OF DAVID'S REFRESHMENT
AT BAHURIM.

B.C. 1023.—PSALMS iii. and iv.

THE MORNING HYMN.

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me!
Many are they that rise up against me.
Many there be which say of my soul,
There is no help for him in God.

But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me;
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cried unto the LORD with my voice,
And he heard me out of his holy hill.

I laid me down and slept ;
 I awaked ; for the LORD sustained me.
 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
 That have set themselves against me round about.

Arise, O LORD ; save me, O my God :
 For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone ;
 Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.
 Salvation belongeth unto the LORD :
 Thy blessing is upon thy people.

THE EVENING HYMN.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness :
 Thou hast enlarged* me when I was in distress ;
 Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame ?
 How long will ye love vanity,† and seek after leasing ?‡
 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself :
 The LORD will hear when I call unto him.
 Stand in awe, and sin not :
 Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.
 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
 And put your trust in the LORD.
 There be many that say, Who will shew us any good ?
 LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
 Thou hast put gladness in my heart,
 More than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.
 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep :
 For thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

LESSON CXII.

THE COUNSEL OF AHITHOPHEL.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xvi. 15—20 ; xvii. 1—14, 23.

And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend ? why wentest thou not with thy friend ?

* Set me free.

† Folly.

‡ Lying.

And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:

And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou.

And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.

For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed* in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.

Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.

Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

* Angry.

And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

LESSON CXIII.

DAVID AT MAHANAIM.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xvii. 15—xviii. 5.

Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel,* for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench† went and told them; and they went and told king David.

Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.

And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David; and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, and his mother was Abigail, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi

* The fuller's well.

† Maid-servant.

the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

Brought beds, and basons,* and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,

And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat : for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away, they will not care for us ; neither if half of us die, will they care for us ; but now thou art worth ten thousand of us : therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

LESSON CXIV.

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xviii. 6—23.

So the people went out into the field against Israel : and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim ;

Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.

For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country : and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth ; and the mule that was under him went away.

And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him,

* Kettles.

and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.*

And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.

Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.

Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

Then said Joab to Cushit,† Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushit bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushit. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushit.

LESSON CXV.

DAVID'S MOURNING.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xviii. 24—xix. 8.

And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

* Made thee a captain.

† An Ethiopian.

And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

And the watchman saw another man running : and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

And, behold, Cushie came ; and Cushie said, Tidings, my lord the king : for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

And the king said unto Cushie, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept : and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !

And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people : for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son !

And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives,

In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants : for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants : for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night : and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king : for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

LESSON CXVI.

DAVID'S RESTORATION.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xix. 9—30.

And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines ; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back ?

And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house ? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.

Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh : wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king ?

And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh ? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man ; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him ; and they went over Jordan before the king.

And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan ;

And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

For thy servant doth know that I have sinned : therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

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But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?

And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?

Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

LESSON CXVII.*

THE DISPUTE OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xix. 31—xx. 2.

And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

* This and the ensuing chapter, though not difficult in themselves, could be omitted in reading with children whose memories it might not be desirable to tax with too many names.

I am this day fourscore years old : and can I discern between good and evil ? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink ? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king ?

Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king : and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward.

Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham ; let him go over with my lord the king ; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and he returned unto his own place.

Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him : and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan ?

And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us : wherefore then be ye angry for this matter ? have we eaten at all of the king's cost ? or hath he given us any gift ?

And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye : why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king ? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite : and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse : every man to his tents, O Israel.

So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri : but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

LESSON CXVIII.

THE MURDER OF AMASA.

B.C. 1023.—2 SAM. xx. 3—23.

And David came unto his house at Jerusalem.

Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah : but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom : take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men : and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof ; and as he went forth it fell out.

And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother ? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand : so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again ; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab.

And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites : and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench : and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear ; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab ?

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And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel : and so they ended the matter.

I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel : thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel : why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

The matter is not so : but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David : deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

Now Joab was over all the host of Israel.

LESSON CXIX.

DAVID'S CHOICE.

ABOUT B.C. 1020.—2 SAM. xxiv. 1—18 *and* 1 CHRON. xxi. 1—18
(*collated*).

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan ; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be : but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants ? why then doth my lord require this thing ? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel ?

Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer :

Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi,* and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,

* The lower part of the new moon ; probably the land where it was worshipped.

And came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites : and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beer-sheba.

So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword : and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them : for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done : and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant ; for I have done very foolishly.

When David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things ; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee

Either three years' famine ; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee ; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait : * let me fall now into the hand of the LORD ; for very great are his mercies : but let me not fall into the hand of man.

So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel : and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it : and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough : stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered ? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed ; but as for these sheep, what have they done ? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house ; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

* Difficulty.

LESSON CXX.

THE PURCHASE OF THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE.

B.C. 1020.—2 SAM. xxiv. 19—25 ; 1 CHRON. xxi. 19—30 (*collated*);
1 CHRON. xxi. 1—5.

And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

And Araunah turned back, and saw the angel ; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Araunah was threshing wheat.

And as David came to Araunah, Araunah looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground.

Then David said to Araunah, Grant me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD : thou shalt grant it me for the full price : that the plague may be stayed from the people.

And Araunah said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes : lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt-offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offering ; I give it all. All this did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king.

And king David said to Araunah, Nay ; but I will verily buy it for the full price : for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.

So David gave to Araunah for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the LORD ; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.

And the LORD commanded the angel ; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon.

But David could not go before it to inquire of God : for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel.

And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel ; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings ; and brass in abundance without weight ;

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Also cedar trees in abundance : for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries : I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

LESSON CXXI.

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

B.C. 1018.—I CHRON. xxviii. (*abridged*).

And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem.

Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people : As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building :

But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever : for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler ; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father ; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel :

And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts : for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments, and my judgments, as at this day.

Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God : that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind : for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : if thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

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Take heed now ; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary : be strong, and do it.

Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat,

And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.

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All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.

And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it : fear not, nor be dismayed : for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee ; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God : and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service : also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment.

LESSON CXXII.

DAVID'S GREAT THANKSGIVING ANTHEM.

B.C. 1016.—1 CHRON. xxix. 1—22.

Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great : for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God.

Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood ; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,

Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal :

The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD ?

•

Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.

Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD : and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation : and David said,

Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power ;

And the glory, and the victory, and the majesty :

For all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine ;

Thine is the kingdom, O LORD,

And thou art exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all ;

And in thine hand is power and might ;

And in thine hand it is to make great,

And to give strength unto all.

Now therefore, our God, we thank thee,

And praise thy glorious name.

But who am I, and what is my people,

That we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ?

For all things come of thee,

And of thine own have we given thee.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers :

Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house

For thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own

I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart,

And hast pleasure in uprightness.

As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart

I have willingly offered all these things :

And now have I seen with joy thy people,

Which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers,

Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people,

And prepare their heart unto thee :

And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart,

To keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes,

And to do all these things,

And to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.

And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped* the LORD, and the king.

And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel :

And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness.

LESSON CXXIII.

THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL.

B.C. 1016.—2 SAM. xxiii. 1—7.

Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

The Spirit of the LORD spake by me,
And his word was in my tongue.

The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men must be just,
Ruling in the fear of God.

And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
Even a morning without clouds ;

As the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

For is not my house so with God ?

Because he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure :

For this is all my salvation, and all my desire ;

Will he not make it to grow ?†

But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands :

But the man that shall touch them

Must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear ;

And they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

* Did honour by bending down.

† The words in *italics* in our version make it appear as if David meant to confess that he had failed, and it had not been so with himself ; but the true purport of the original has been preserved in the reading we have ventured to give from Bishop Wordsworth.

LESSON CXXIV.

THE REBELLION OF ADONIJAH.

I KINGS i. 32—53.

B.C. 1015.—One more disturbance vexed the last days of David. It is not quite clear whether it took place before or after his great reception of the gifts of the Israelites for the Temple, for it is related only in the First Book of Kings, while the thanksgiving anthem is only in that of Chronicles. We have placed it later because it joins rather with the history of Solomon than of his father. David had become very aged and feeble, and was confined to his chamber, when Adonijah, the eldest survivor of his sons, set up his claim to the throne. His mother was named Haggith, one of the Hebrew wives; and he was as handsome and ambitious as Absalom. Unwilling to submit to the decree, divine though it was, which set a mere lad before him, he took advantage of his father's age and Solomon's youth to draw together a party of whom the chief were Joab, to whom the appointment of the man of peace was doubtless unwelcome, and Abiathar, the High Priest, who seems to have been jealous of Zadok, the head of the elder line of Aaron. With these, and all the men whom they could bring together, he went out to En-rogel, the fountain where the two young priests had once been hidden, and which seems to have belonged to a garden palace beyond the walls. Here Adonijah made a great feast, to which he called all his brothers except Solomon, and many of the mighty men. Tidings were brought to David in his sick chamber, first by Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and then by Nathan the prophet, and his resolution was taken as vigorously as ever.

And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon :

And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel : and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne ; for he shall be king in my stead : and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen : the LORD God of my lord the king say so too.

As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar ?

And while he yet spake, behold Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came : and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule :

And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon : and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard.

And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon : for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth : but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon : and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

LESSON CXXV.

THE DEATH OF DAVID.

B.C. 1015.—I KINGS ii. 1—10; I CHRON. xxix. 23—30.

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.

And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel.

And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years ; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour : and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.

Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer,

With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

LESSON CXXVI.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE REBELS.

B.C. 1015.—I KINGS ii. 26—46.

And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields ; for thou art worthy of death : but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the LORD God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD ; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

Then tidings came to Joab : for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD ; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay ; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him ; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever : but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon

his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him : and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host : and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die : thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good : as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish, son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.

And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants : and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.

And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good.

Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to,* that thou didst to David my father : therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head.

And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

* Aware of, in secret.

LESSON CXXVII.

THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL, WHICH HIS MOTHER
TAUGHT HIM.

PROV. xxxi. 10—31.

B.C. 1015.—*It is not quite certain, but there is great reason to believe that the poem that follows was Bathsheba's instruction to her son, on what the perfect woman ought to be, whom she hoped to see his wife. Lemuel means "dedicated to God," and might well be used to conceal the name of Solomon when the poem went forth among the Israelites. Not being Solomon's own, it appears not to have been added to the Book of Proverbs till Hezekiah's scribes collected such sayings as were current among the Israelites, but not written down. If it be indeed the queen's, it shows her to have had much wisdom and genius; and at the same time it is sad to think that she had fallen from her own high standard herself, or perhaps that, during her married life with David, she learnt what was the true glory of woman, and hoped to see in her son's wife what she could never be herself; though, alas! if she lived, it was to see how much stronger example is than precept.*

Who can find a virtuous woman?
For her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,
So that he shall have no need of spoil.
She will do him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
She seeketh wool, and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchants' ships,
She bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night,
And giveth meat to her household,
And a portion to her maidens.
She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
She girdeth her loins with strength,
And strengtheneth her arms.
She perceiveth that her merchandise is good:
Her candle goeth not out by night.
She layeth her hands to the spindle,
And her hands hold the distaff.
She stretcheth out her hand to the poor,

Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 She is not afraid of the snow for her household :
 For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ; *
 Her clothing is silk and purple.
 Her husband is known in the gates,
 When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ;
 And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
 Strength and honour are her clothing ;
 And she shall rejoice in time to come.
 She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
 And in her tongue is the law of kindness.
 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
 And eateth not the bread of idleness.
 Her children arise up, and call her blessed ;
 Her husband also, and he praiseth her.
 Many daughters have done virtuously,
 But thou excellest them all.
 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
 But a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
 Give her of the fruit of her hands ;
 And let her own works praise her in the gates.

LESSON CXXVIII.†

A FEW VERSES OF THE SONG OF SONGS.

CANTICLES ii. 1—4 ; 8—17.

Solomon wrote many songs, but only one has been preserved. It may have been written in his early youth, when he married Naamah, the mother of his only son, or it may be his song of greeting to his Egyptian bride.

I am the rose of Sharon,
 And the lily of the valleys.
 As the lily among thorns,
 So is my love among the daughters.
 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
 So is my beloved among the sons.
 I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
 And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

* Embroidery.

† Not for the younger ; but I have thought it better to preoccupy the mind with some idea of this wonderful hymn.

He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me was love.

* * * * *

The voice of my beloved !
Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart :
Behold, he standeth behind our wall ;
He looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the
lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on the earth ;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the stairs,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice,
And thy countenance is comely.
Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines :
For our vines have tender grapes.
My beloved is mine, and I am his :
He feedeth among the lilies.
Until the day break, and the shadows flee away
Turn, my beloved,
And be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of
Bether.

LESSON CXXIX.

SOLOMON'S MARRIAGE.

B.C. 1014.—I KINGS iii. 1 ; PSALM xlv.*

And Solomon made affinity† with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

* Not for the younger. ‡Some think the Psalm belongs to a later king.

† Connected himself.

My heart is inditing* a good matter :
I speak of the things which I have made touching the king :
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
Thou art fairer than the children of men :
Grace is poured into thy lips :
Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty,
With thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness
and righteousness ;
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ;
Whereby the people fall under thee.
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness :
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness
above thy fellows.

All thy garments smell of myrrh,† and aloes, and cassia,‡
Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.
Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women :
Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.
Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ;
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ;
So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty :
For he is thy Lord ; and worship thou him.
And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift ;
Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.
The king's daughter is all glorious within :
Her clothing is of wrought gold.
She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework : §
The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto
thee.
With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought :
They shall enter into the king's palace.
Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations :
Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

* The word properly means "swelling over with." † Pure aromatic perfume.
‡ Slips of the bark of the cassia. § Or, over carpets of embroidery.

LESSON CXXX.

THE CHOICE OF SOLOMON.

B.C. 1014.—2 CHRON. i. 1—6; 1 KINGS iii. 5—15.

And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.

So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.

* * * * *

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise

•

and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour : so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

And Solomon awoke ; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

LESSON CXXXI.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

I KINGS iii. 19—28 ; iv. 20—34.

B.C. 1014.—Soon after Solomon's accession, an incident occurred that greatly spread the fame of his sagacity. Two women, each with a young infant, one only three days older than the other, were sleeping in the same house. They came before the king, one of them making her complaint.

This woman's child died in the night, because she overlaid it.

And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead : but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

And the other woman said, Nay ; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No ; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead : and the other saith, Nay ; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.

Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise * slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

* By no means.

Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it : she is the mother thereof.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged ; and they feared the king : for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

* * * * *

Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river* unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt : they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.

For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azza,† over all the kings on this side the river : and he had peace on all sides round about him.

And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month : they lacked nothing.

Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men ; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol : and his fame was in all nations round about.

And he spake three thousand proverbs : and his songs were a thousand and five.

And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

* Euphrates.

† Gaza.

LESSON CXXXII.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE.

B.C. 1014.—I KINGS v. 1—18.

And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon ; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father : for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.*

And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon ; and my servants shall be with thy servants : and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint : for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for : and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.†

My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea : and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them : and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him : and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon ; and they two made a league together.

* Thing to meet him.

† Cypress.

And king Solomon raised a levy* out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

LESSON CXXXIII.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

B.C. 1012.—2 CHRON. iii. and 1 KINGS vi. vii.
(*abridged*).

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

And the oracle† he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

* Men called out.

† The place where the Lord spake, the Holy of Holies.

And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house : also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree.

And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.

And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass : and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

And he made a molten sea : it stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east : and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he had made king Solomon for the house of the Lord.

In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many : neither was the weight of the brass found out.

And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD : the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was,

And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold,

And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold ; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple.

So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated ; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif : *

And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, † which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

* The flower month, about May.

† The fruit month, about October.

LESSON CXXXIV.

THE DEDICATION.

B.C. 1005.—2 CHRON. v.

Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished : and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated ; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which was in the seventh month.

And all the elders of Israel came ; and the Levites took up the ark.

And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up.

Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims ;

For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle ; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.

There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place : (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course :

Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets :)

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD ; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of

musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever : that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD ;

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud : for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

LESSON CXXXV.

THE BLESSING OF SOLOMON.

B.C. 1005.—2 CHRON. vi. 1—13.

Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel : and all the congregation of Israel stood.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying,

Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there ; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel :

But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there ; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart :

Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house ; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.

The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken : for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.

And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands :

For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court : and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven.

LESSON CXXXVI.

SOLOMON'S INTERCESSION.

B.C. 1005.—2 CHRON. vi. 14—42.

And Solomon said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven nor in the earth ; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts :

Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him ; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel ; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.

Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified * which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth ? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house which I have built !

Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee :

That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there ; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.

Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place : hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven ; and when thou hearest, forgive.

If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house ;

Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head ; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee ; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house ;

Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee ; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them ;

Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of

* Made to come true.

thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk ; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting,* or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars ; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land ; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be :

Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house :

Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest ; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men :)

That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched-out arm ; if they come and pray in this house ;

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for : that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name ;

Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near ;

Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly ;

If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name :

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed : remember the mercies of David thy servant.

* Blight on the crops.

LESSON CXXXVII.

THE ANSWER TO SOLOMON.

B.C. 1005-992.—1 KINGS vi. ; 2 CHRON. vii.

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices ; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep : so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

And the priests waited on their offices : the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry ; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD : for there he offered burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meat-offerings, and the fat.

Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering* in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.

And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly : for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.

And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

* * * * *

But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon.

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people ;

* Way to.

*

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways ; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent * unto the prayer that is made in this place.

For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever : and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments ;

Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them ;

Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them ; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.

And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it ; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house ?

And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them : therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

LESSON CXXXVIII.

SOLOMON'S PRAISE OF WISDOM.

ABOUT B.C. 1000.—PROVERBS viii. *and* ix.

I Wisdom dwell with Prudence,
And find out knowledge of witty† inventions.
The fear of the LORD is to hate evil:
Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
And the froward mouth, do I hate.
Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom:
I am understanding ; I have strength.
By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice.

* Attentive.

† Wise.

By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth.
I love them that love me ;
And those that seek me early shall find me.
Riches and honour are with me ;
Yea, durable riches and righteousness.
My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ;
And my revenue than choice silver.
I lead in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of judgment :
That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance ;
And I will fill their treasures.
The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth ;
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth :
While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
When he prepared the heavens, I was there :
When he set a compass * upon the face of the depth :
When he established the clouds above :
When he strengthened the fountains of the deep :
When he gave to the sea his decree,
That the waters should not pass his commandment :
When he appointed the foundations of the earth :
Then I was by him, as one brought up with him :
And I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him :
Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ;
And my delights were with the sons of men.
Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children :
For blessed are they that keep my ways.
Hear instruction, and be wise,
And refuse it not.
Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors,
For whoso findeth me findeth life,
And shall obtain favour of the LORD.
But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul :
All they that hate me love death.
Wisdom hath builded her house,
She hath hewn out her seven pillars :
She hath killed her beasts ; she hath mingled her wine ;
She hath also furnished her table.

* A circle.

She hath sent forth her maidens :
 She crieth upon the highest places of the city,
 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither :
 As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
 Come, eat of my bread,
 And drink of the wine which I have mingled.

* * * * *

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom :
 And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.
 For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
 And the years of thy life shall be increased.

LESSON CXXXIX.

SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY.

B.C. 992.—I KINGS x. 1—24, 27.

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones : and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

And Solomon told her all her questions : there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD ; there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it : and, behold, the half was not told me : thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel : because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones : there came no more such

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abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug* trees, and precious stones.

And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers : there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

And king Solomon made two hundred targets † of beaten gold : six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold ; three pound of gold went to one shield : and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind : and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps : there was not the like made in any kingdom.

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; none were of silver : it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram : once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

* * * * *

And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

* Sandal-wood.

† Shields

LESSON CXL.

THE FALL OF SOLOMON.

ABOUT B.C. 984.—1 KINGS xi. 1—17, 21, 22.

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ;

Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not take them, neither shall they take you : for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods : Solomon clave unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines : and his wives turned away his heart.

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods : and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as-did David his father.

Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods : but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake : but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom ; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite : he was of the king's seed in Edom.

For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom ;

(For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom :)

That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt ; Hadad being yet a little child.

And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country ? And he answered, Nothing : howbeit let me go in any wise.

LESSON CXLI.

THE APPOINTMENT OF JEROBOAM.

B.C. 984.—I KINGS xi. 26—40.

And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king : Solomon built Millo,* and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour : and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way, and he had clad himself with a new garment ; and they too were alone in the field :

And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces :

And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces : for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee :

But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel :

Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand : but I will

* The citadel.

make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes :

But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did ; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

LESSON CXLII.

SOLOMON'S WEARINESS.

ABOUT B.C. 980.—ECCLES.* i. ; ii. I—II.

The words of the Preacher the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities ; all is vanity.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh : but the earth abideth for ever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north ; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea ; yet the sea is not full ; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

All things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it : the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new ? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

* A few modern critics dispute this book being by Solomon, but there is no reasonable ground for so doing.

There is no remembrance of former things ; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven : this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun ; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

That which is crooked cannot be made straight : and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem : yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly : I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief : and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure : and, behold, this also is vanity.

I said of laughter, It is mad : and of mirth, What doeth it ?

I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom ; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

I made me great works ; I builded me houses ; I planted me vineyards :

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits :

I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees :

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house ; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me :

I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces : I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem : also my wisdom remained with me.

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy ; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour : and this was my portion of all my labour.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do : and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

LESSON CXLIII.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

ABOUT B.C. 980.—ECCLES. xi. 7—10 ; xii.

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun :

But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all ; yet let him remember the days of darkness ; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh : for childhood and youth are vanity.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them ;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain :

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low ;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets ;

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ; all is vanity.

And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge ; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words : and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

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And further, by these, my son, be admonished : of making many books there is no end ; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

END OF VOL. II.

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